Nomination of Agency by Bangladesh for Transition of Goods

341. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bangladesh had decided to nominate their own agency for transition goods from Calcutta to areas in the North East; and

(b) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Under the provisions of the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade, the Competent Authority for the purpose of the Protocol from the Bangladesh side is the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

During the visit of the Commerce Minister of Bangladesh in May 1999, it was agreed to set up a Joint Group of Experts to consider, *inter alia,* the modalities for the movement of goods from one point in India to another through Bangladesh in pursuance of Article VIII of the India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement of 1980 and Article 12 of the Agreement of SAPTA of 1993, by Bangladesh carriers.

Issuance of Visa No. 20 by Kuwait Mission

342. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ordered the Kuwait Mission in India to stop immediately the issuance of Visa No. 20 to Indian domestics going to Kuwait; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The employment of Indian housemaids and male domestics in Kuwait was suspended with effect from 4th June, 1999, due to concerns relating to their working conditions. The Kuwaiti Embassy in New Delhi was formally informed of this decision and was requested not to issue visas for this category of workers.

Chinese Intrusion across the LAC

343. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent Kargil conflict there has been significant Chinese intrusion across the LAC into the Indian territory in the southern Ladakh region.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) government's reaction with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) (a) to (c) The resolution of the boundary question between India and China is outstanding. The two sides also have differences in perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas, including in the Ladakh region of J&K (Western Sector). Both sides carry out patrolling activity in the India-China border areas. Violations of the LAC are taken up through diplomatic channels and at Border Personnel Meetings/ Flag Meetings.

The two sides are discussing the boundary question in the framework of the Joint Working Group. India and China have reiterated the objective of seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question through dialogue. The Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1993) and the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1996) provide an institutional framework for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas.

Government remain vigilant and take all necessary and appropriate measures to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of India.

Task Force under Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia

†344. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a task force has been constituted under the leadership of Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia;

(b) if so, when was it constituted;

(c) whether it includes other members also;

(d) if so, the names of such members and the responsibility given to this task force; and

(e) whether there is any time limit also to fulfil this responsibility and if so what is that?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The composition and terms of reference of the Action Force are given in the statement (*see* below). The Action Force which was constituted on 17th November 1998 submitted its report on 18th October, 1999.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.